

Episode 05: The Doctrine of Discovery in the context of Abya Yala with Tupac Enrique Acosta

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([00:00:08](#)):

Hello, and welcome to the Mapping the Doctrine of Discovery podcast. The producers of this podcast would like to acknowledge (singing) with respect the Onondaga Nation, Fire Keepers of the Haudenosaunee, the Indigenous Peoples on whose ancestral lands Syracuse University now stands. And now introducing your host, Philip Arnold and Sandra Bigtree.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:00:29](#)):

Hello, and welcome to the podcast. I am Phil Arnold, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Syracuse University, as well as core faculty member in Native American Indigenous Studies and the Founding Director of the Skā•noñh Great Law Peace Center at Onondaga Lake.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:00:46](#)):

And I'm Sandy Bigtree, citizen of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne and Phil and I are both founding members of the Indigenous Values Initiative, which fosters collaborative educational work between the academic community and the Haudenosaunee. We're located actually in Onondaga Nation territory, so they're a vital part of this collaboration. Everything is vetted through the Central Fire. We want to promote the message of peace that was brought to Onondaga Lake many thousands of years ago. Today, we will be speaking with Tupac Enrique-Accosta.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:01:25](#)):

Yes, our good friend Nahuatl friend, Tupac Enrique-Accosta is Izkaloteka Mexica Azteca of Tonatierra Institute. One of the original conveners of the gathering of Tlahuac Aztlan in 1984 and lives and works in the O'otham territories of Arizona, Phoenix, that sent a message to Pope John Paul II calling for the Vatican State to reexamine the fallacious principles of the Papal Bulls of Alexander VI purporting to grant "domain" over the territories and Nations of Indigenous Peoples. This letter received a response via the Vatican Secretary of State in May 1984 from the office of the Bishop of Phoenix, which was incoherent, illogical and paternalistic. Subsequent in 1984, Tonatierra has been consistently advancing the dismantling of the Doctrine of Discovery in a series of coordinated community campaigns led by Indigenous Peoples from the local-regional, continental-global contexts of geopolitical reference operating as Secretariat of the Continental Commission of Abya Yala. Welcome Tupac to our conversations.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:03:03](#)):

Hello, good afternoon, good morning, whatever it may be.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:03:08](#)):

Can you tell us a little more about how you define the Doctrine of Christian Discovery?

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:03:18](#)):

It's a pathogen. It's a psychological pathogen that's been instituted over the past 500 years now as a defamation of our common humanity. As a pathogen, you could compare it to, for example, the corona, right? The corona pandemic. The pathogen, the pandemic, it encompasses and it's contagious to everything that it encounters. But as an intellectual pathogen, the agency of that, the spread of the pathology, because it produces the pathology of the normalization of what is the criminal activity of genocide and colonization. The virus has the shroud around it, the corona, right?

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:04:06](#)):

The virus doesn't have a life of its own, correct? If it couldn't attach itself to another organic life form, there would be no place for this virus in the natural world, either in the human being or any other organic life form, a bat among any other creature. The virus doesn't have any instructions of its own. It has to ascribe for another living body to replicate itself.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:04:30](#)):

The same thing with this doctrine is that it has provided the pathological nature that normalizes what is the defamation of humanity and the institution of the crime against humanity, which is colonization and genocide and specifically in particular to the original Nations of Indigenous Peoples of this continent, which as you well know, why it is called America, right? I'm holding up here a document. You must be familiar with it. I'm sure your students would be familiar with it or might be interested in it. Have you guys ever read the Müller report? You guys ever read the Müller report?

Philip P. Arnold ([00:05:15](#)):

No, I must admit, I haven't.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:05:17](#)):

I'm not talking about Robert Mueller. I'm talking about Martin Waldseemüller who produced the first cartography that denominated this continent as America in the year 1507. He was a German dude. He was an academic too. He was operating out of some institution in France and they produced a document called Encyclopedia Universalis Cosmographia in 1507. In this document, this is the first time that you saw the terminology of America applied to the land mass that was known as the continent of America in this part of the world.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:05:57](#)):

According to who? Let's clarify. According to they who got here from the east, although they call themselves the west. They have a mythology. There's a mythology that surrounds this narrative and the core, the path there, the path of [foreign language 00:06:15] the voice of the patriarchy that drives this narrative is coming from the patriarchal authority system that is built off of the papacy. You could see the correlations to patriarchy and then the institutionalization of the state from the divine right of Kings, the Pope and the divine right of states. We got the states.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:06:41](#)):

But here it is. In 1507, Martin Waldseemüller presented the first map where he designated this continent, which was unknown to them, with the nomenclature of America in 1507. Based on this, it's been standardized and normalized, but even Martin Waldseemüller came to recognize it was a mistake because what had happened was he used the term America because he thought that Amerigo Vespucci had got here before Columbus.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:07:10](#)):

At that time, similar to the social media network realm that we live in now, such as this Zoom technology, the printing operations were becoming popularized. There was a gentleman who wrote a narrative about his explorations as an investor and as a member of the expeditions to this continent. He wrote a narrative about that and this guy's name was Amerigo Vespucci. That narrative got popularized throughout the continent of Europe. At the time Martin Waldseemüller

made his map, the narrative that was popularized at the time was that Amerigo Vespucci had got here before Columbus, although he didn't get here until 1493, Vespucci.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:07:53](#)):

So what happened? Martin Waldseemüller made two other maps. In those two other maps, he took that name of America off of the continent because he realized he had made a mistake. If anything, he should have given it the name Columbia or Columbus because he recognized Columbus had beat Amerigo Vespucci. So even the guy who put the name of America on the map that everybody got on their dollar bills and in their currency and in their education, he recognized, "Hey, that's a mistake."

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:08:24](#)):

But what had happened, it was too late, the pathology of building a society based on a falsehood, on the lie. It was already out there. It was already spreading. Based on that 1492, 1493, what happened then? The Papal Bulls, right? What you had then was you had a concept, a cultural context that was called a civilization. It's known as a civilization, but again, based on what concept of what it is to be a member of such a society, whereas in distinction to what does it mean to be a human being who was a member of the original Nations of the Indigenous Peoples of Mother Earth? Those are two concepts.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:09:07](#)):

The Doctrine of Discovery is the one that arrived in this continent based on that dominion concept of the patriarchy instituted with the Papal Bulls and then formalize in the systems of the states through the Doctrine of Discovery in each national constitution from Canada all the way down to Brazil, right? Including Cuba. Everybody's talking about Cuba today. Including Cuba, the foundation of Cuba is claimed the sovereignty on that island. What is it? It's the original claim made by Spain in the time of the vice royalty. The same Mexico, the same Guatemala, the same El Salvador. It's the same story, different chapters of the same narrative.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:09:45](#)):

So in this experience that we've had in engaging, we never engaged with this concept without predicating it. This is a process, a process of dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery. Not necessarily for ourselves, within ourself, because guess what? Neither Amerigo Vespucci or Christopher Columbus or Martin Waldseemüller, none of those guys have got the conceptual capacity to define a reality as original Nations of Mother Earth. They just don't have the capacity and the intellectual framework that they're coming from. Why? Because they had already alienated themselves from a direct relationship with the natural world and Mother Earth. It's a system of domination. It's a system of alienation.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:10:32](#)):

We would also add to it, to what we already said, it's a pathology. It's an intellectual pathology that has allowed for the normalization of colonization and genocide in this continent and around the world. But in order to do the diagnostic on it, you begin by analyzing and dismantling it, which we've done that part. The doctrine is dismantled. There's no place you can go in this world and proclaim itself, according to the precepts, theological, philosophical, cultural that it presented itself 500 years ago, it can't do that anymore with any rational validity, ethical legitimacy, or moral right, much less legal or political argument because it's an instrument of colonization, which is illegal. Colonization is illegal. The Doctrine of Discovery is the pathology

that normalizes that colonization. It's a pathological system that has to be addressed as a pathology that has similar to the corona impacted and infected all of human society.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:11:32](#)):

But then you ask, well, like they ask about the coronavirus, "Where did it start? How did it get started?" Then you realize, it might've got started here and there, but then how did it become so transmissible? What are the agents of transmission? White Supremacy, for example--White Supremacy as an instrument of European American colonization to be specific. Then the institution of that supremacy concept in the legal system of the successor stage to the doctrine in this continent, across the board without exception.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:12:04](#)):

But then again, you get to the final question, which is the first question. How do the colonizers come to normalize that pathology within themselves to consider it normal to do that to another nation of the Indigenous, the humanity of Mother Earth? How did that dehumanization process, pathology produces the dehumanization, right? It genocides the humanity. How did it get to that level without having first accomplished the dehumanization of the very colonizers themselves?

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:12:34](#)):

In other words, you get to the point where you recognize that the first victims of this genocide and colonization are the colonizers themselves because they have normalized this schema--psychological, political, cultural, religious, and cosmological. They have normalized it to the point where it goes unquestioned. That's why it's called a doctrine. If you have a doctrine, you have a program running through your intellectual system. We're not even thinking anymore. You're just regurgitating or habitually enacting what the doctrine has already proposed to you. "This is what it is to be a normal member of a society. This is what it is to be a normal society."

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:13:12](#)):

Those are all agencies of pathology and also eventually not only genocide and colonization. It has brought us now to the point of terricide. The pathology of colonization genocide that is driven by the precepts of the Doctrine of Discovery as instituted on the regimes of Christendom, we're now at the point of terricide, where the very capacity of earth to be our mother, to be Mother Earth is at risk and at threat, at least for us human beings. We know Mother Earth, we're not her only kids, right? We're not the only children of Mother Earth. She has many and you know what? If we left the scene, I bet you a bunch of those other kids of hers, such as the flowers, the ocean life, they're not going to be too sad about our departure in terms of the damage and the ecocide that's part of the terricide. Ecocide is a dimension of terricide.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:14:13](#)):

It's a dimension of terricide that we have brought about, talking about we now in the regional sense of what it is to be an Indigenous Nation because we understand our Indigenous nationhood is constituted of those reciprocal and complementary relationships that we have with the very powers of life and the laws of how those life powers interchange and correlate with each other in terms of the Mother Earth, the Sea, the Atmosphere and Father Sky, Father Sun.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:14:46](#)):

We're defined by the earth and becoming detached from that special relationship that brings us good health and peace, reality becomes a construct. That's what we're living in right now, all

over the world. People are unable to identify what's real because they don't know. It's through this detachment to the natural world. So, this is work that will benefit all human beings on this planet if they can start deconstructing where we've come from this detachment to the Earth. That's our only hope of grounding ourselves again, connecting to the regenerative energies of creation.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:15:34](#)):

Well, Phil and Sandy, at one point, our relatives, our elders up there at Onondaga, they were convened. There was a convening taking place among the Indians and I mean the Indians from India. The Indigenous Peoples of that subcontinent, of India, they had a convening where they called the convening to discuss what is the alternative? You have the United Nations as a global system and with the entry of China, now it finally achieved that global status. Until China actually joined the UN. It really wasn't a global entity. It was intended to be a global entity of world domination under the economic and political and military infrastructure coming out after World War II, but it wasn't until China joined that it really became a global entity. A meeting was convened in India by the Indigenous Peoples of India, to which a brother, Oren Lyons, was asked to attend, but because of the issue of the passport entry and return, Oren couldn't make it and I was asked to go in his stead.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:16:46](#)):

So I met with those folks in India and there, Indigenous Peoples there from all the world discussing what's the alternative to the United Nation system as a global system of self-governance that is built not from colonization and domination or doctrine, but from reality, the reality of our natural relationship with each other, as a dimension, as an ecosystem, the human ecosystem, as an ecosystem of the planet. Not as a dominator, not as a patriarchal, a hierarchical, a kingship system, but an element of a kinship system where we all relate to each other as being integrated and in relation to each other through the cycles of life over the millennia since time immortal.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:17:35](#)):

So I'm mentioning it now because, at that point, what we recognize, we got a lot of instruction there. Although the Doctrine of Discovery is history, the Papal Bulls that I always mention, the Dum Diversas, and the history of how that became instituted as part of the cultural infrastructure of domination from the concept of the divine right of kings and the divine right of states, et cetera. But when we got to India, they said, "But there's something more to the story, which has to go back with the very first invasion of the Indus Valley 5,000 years ago by the Aryans where they first instituted the pathology of White Supremacy.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:18:22](#)):

5,000 years ago, they took apart the culture of the Indus Valley, which wasn't a civilization. It wasn't built upon the concept of metropolis. The mercantile version of the mechanisms of greed, which basically that's what the monarchies of the world represent. Instead of metropolis, the original culture of the Indus Valley was agropolis based, agropolis. Urban concentrations of populations, but not determined by economic systems, the exploitation and appropriation. Agropolis, where the agricultural and nutritional plantations were interwoven into the settlements. So even if they were at a scale, and those always included by nation, a ceremonial, astronomical and cosmetic relationship with the star nations. So that alienation, it wouldn't exist at all either.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:19:26](#)):

What I'm simply saying is that this story, the 5,000 year story of the institutionalization of white supremacy that began with the Aryan invasion of the Indus Valley, it was later extrapolated to become the mechanism that now produced the situation that you now have in the United States of America, right? Where Donald Trump is the president. He's the president of a white people of the United States of America. It doesn't matter what the vote is to them. They were never interested in the vote. The vote was just a mechanism to control, by electoral system, their position of domination on the continent and, recognizing that they were not going to be a demographic majority any longer, they moved into another phase of consolidating their positions of white power in isolation and the items of power that are tied together with this ideology of White Supremacy within the American version of the British Empire, extrapolated from the imperial super structure of Christendom, which is built upon the Doctrine of Discovery.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:20:29](#)):

Wow, that's powerful.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:20:32](#)):

Wow.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:20:34](#)):

That's powerful. So you are someone, as you mentioned, you're widely traveled. You go and advocate for Indigenous Peoples all over the world. You travel in Latin America often. So can you give us a sense of what the Doctrine of Discovery means globally, that there's a kind of unified sense that this is the origin of the problem, but then also give us a sense of how there are different ideas about the Doctrine of Discovery, different language barriers, right? So give our listeners a sense of the importance of the Doctrine of Discovery globally, but also the particularities of how it's being played out in these different landscapes.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:21:33](#)):

Okay. Well, let's start by first unpacking the concept of Latin America, right? Most people who use the term do not know that term originated in Paris, France, 1853. The Spanish Empire, the English version of empire, the Portuguese version of empire, the Dutch version of empire, which the Onondaga and the Haudenosaunee are familiar with, right? The French saw this play being played out. They said, "We want a piece of that pie, the American pie." So they said, "We're going to carve out a piece of that pie, the French piece of that pie. We're going to call that piece of the pie Latin America."

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:22:09](#)):

It came out of the Bonaparte, the power structure in France. They said, "We're going to go push our buoy out there. We're going to create an empire in that continent. We're going to start with Mexico. We're going to push this guy called Maximilian and we're going to create a beachhead in Mexico and from there, move north and join forces with those white supremacists that are now in congregation," in what was the Confederacy in the U.S. Southern States. The plan of Latin America was intended to join forces, to create an alliance with the Confederacy in the south so that they can continue to perpetuate the White Supremacy concept, where this would be the French version of it. To provide access to the French economic interest to the resource that were being appropriated and exploited on the continent.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:23:07](#)):

And so they sent Maximilian over to institute Latin America as a geopolitical construct. It didn't come from here. It's a play of empire. It's the French card in the deck.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:23:20](#)):

However, when Maximilian got here, what happened was the Mexicans kicked his ass at the Battle of Cinco de Mayo in Puebla, right? So therefore, in a lot of ways, especially for a Mexican Indigenous person such as I am, to claim the Latin America as a nomenclature, as an identity, is an oxymoron or more better said, it's like 40,000 morons trying to ride a single ox. It don't fit. It don't make sense. To make the correlations, we don't understand it unless we have our own geopolitical construct and context to address these issues continentally, regionally, locally, and of course, globally, right?

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:24:03](#)):

So do we have such a context? Mm, yes, we do. One of the elements that has allowed us to regenerate and reconstruct this context, because whether it's against Bolsonaro in Brazil, or Trudeau in Canada, Trump, Obama, who's the very most recent guy? Who's the most recent guy in the U.S. capital? Biden. Biden, whomever it may be or in Mexico right now, it's Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). Any one of these guys, any one of these countries, they do not define our nationhood.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:24:43](#)):

For that reason, we came together in 2013 in a conference that was sponsored by ASU and assembled the first International Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery International Conference. The Mapuche came from the south. We had people from the north. Steve Newcomb was there. Jake Edwards was there. The people from Mexico were there, people from El Salvador, from Guatemala, the Mayas, the Tamaya. We had a continental delegation come together to address this issue of dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery because it was recognized and realizing it articulated it's a common case with different chapters of stipulation, Canada, U.S., Mexico. The way it's been instituted and implemented is distinct and particular, but it's the same case.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:25:38](#)):

So to the issue that you're bringing up here, Phil, when we found this out, we knew this all along, but when we got together at the continental level in 2013 and put that argument together about how we were going to push back against that pathology in the five areas of law, education, religion, environment, and the youth, the future generations, that set up argumentation that we put together in 2013 that has held up wherever we've taken it. Because after 2013, we continued the process.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:26:10](#)):

We went to Mexico, we went to Columbia, we went to Chile, we went back to Columbia, we went to Mexico, we went back to Columbia, we went to Guatemala, we went to El Salvador. The same process has been unfolding with the particulars, as each state mechanism institutionalized the doctrine to accomplish this dismantling of the Doctrine of Discovery under an organized framework that we call the commission, Continental Commission of Abya Yala.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:26:40](#)):

That's our mandate, to take this information forward and present it in the local, regional and national context of each country to move forward continentally to bring the case forward to the conscience of humanity for the purpose of realizing in the world that we believe must come to be. It's destined to come to be a world of peaceful and just relationships that we need to have with each other if we're going to have a chance of addressing the climate crisis that is upon us all, upon us all, upon us all. In that climate crisis scenario, there is no they. It's all us.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:27:21](#)):

But to get a chance to have an effective response to the climate crisis, which is brought about by the climate crisis of the coastal climate that the pathology of the doctrine has normalized well, what's the vaccine against that? The cultural vaccine to deal with that is what we're speaking of here in this program, the process of dismantling, diagnosing and moving forward and beyond that pathology to where it's not only dismantled, we have to supersede it.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:27:55](#)):

We're at that phase now. The doctrine has been dismantled. It doesn't hold up anywhere. Even the Vatican, the Pope, the Bishop there in Syracuse, right? The Bishop in Syracuse said, "Hey, that thing is no good." It's been dismantled. Even those who have been proselytizing it or saying what we've been saying all along, we're beyond that phase now. We're going into the next phase, which is now the superseding of the doctrine. I make this quote because why? At one time, even the Vatican taught that the sun went around the earth, the terra-centric version of their cosmology. Then the version of the heliocentric with Copernicus, they changed their tools. "Yeah, well, maybe it's not like that. Maybe the earth is going around the sun. Maybe so." Okay. So which one is it? Is the sun going around the earth or is the earth going around the sun, right? You ask that question, what would most people say today? They're not going to ascribe to the terra-centric version, right? They most likely would say, "Well, it's really the earth is going around in the sun," right?

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:29:05](#)):

But in reality, the earth and the sun are going around each other because they're both symptoms of what is known in the Western world as mass and gravity and attraction and therefore there's rotation. Therefore, there's this motion that correlates to the relationship of the mass and gravity in which we're embedded.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:29:30](#)):

Here's the distinction I think that is important to the point that Sandy was making. In our world, the point that Sandy was making, in our world, we don't have that distinction between science and spirituality, religion and culture. In our world, those are always intertwined. We know that observation is the foundation of all science and we also know that the science of observation is the science of science. Now we're talking about the quantum dimension of this systems of knowledge, right? In that way, we know that in our language systems is taught the concept of what is known as gravity on one side culturally or religiously, and the concept of what is known as gravity, physical attraction on the other side. We have one word for both of those things. It's the same thing.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:30:27](#)):

That's what we say when we hear those words of Thanksgiving that come before everything. It's the power that puts things in their place, love, gravity. You take those two concepts in the Eurocentric, Indo-European language structures through which those doctrines are embedded,

right? They're embedded through language structures. The grammar systems that are the laws of the laws of those laws by which they are articulated. Any legal system needs the language system to be implemented. What is the grammar of those language systems? We see that alienation process began right back where that in the beginning, where they made that distinction between what is love and what is gravity. For that psychology, that's true system. For us, it's not true. It's the power that holds the universe together and allows things to be who they are, what they are, and also, I'm going to close, when they are, which is no. (singing)

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([00:31:28](#)):

Do you need help catching up on today's topic? Or do you want to learn more about the resources mentioned? If so, please check our website at podcast.doctrineofdiscovery.org for more information. Now, back to the conversation.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:31:46](#)):

I remember you came to Syracuse once and we held a very short water ceremony on Onondaga Lake and it was no big deal. We had Tadodaho there, Jake, others, and we were just out there next to the lake giving thanks. They were using their language. We were discussing it in the Onondaga language, which is their ceremonial language. At the moment the ceremony had concluded, we saw birds, fish jump, birds fly, everybody acknowledged the fact that we had done a good thing, and then we talked a little while and so this is just kind of verification of what you were just saying, right? That if there is this sort of sense of gratitude along with words that are, these ancient words, these ancient protocols that have the ability to connect us to the natural world, then the world responds, and that so much of that is lost.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:33:20](#)):

So much of that is just destroyed, just think in terms of education. I'm an educator. The legacy of education of Indigenous Peoples is not good. We've got this conversation going on right now. We were just talking about the residential schools. Residential schools in Canada, residential schools in the United States. We've got twice as many residential schools in the U.S. than they do in Canada. We're just talking about all the missions, California and throughout Mexico, et cetera. So, how are we to reeducate the youth? How are we to connect, give them hope? Because so much of what we're dealing with now is the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:34:23](#)):

Yeah. I think before we started the call, the recording, we began to have this conversation because, just yesterday, I was on a call like this with some folks that put together the conversation on dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery in Mexico. That was accomplished yesterday. The dismantling of the Doctrine of Discovery in Mexico is now done. It's done. Because again, once the truth comes out, the truth is always more powerful than the lie. Why? Because the lie needs the truth to be a lie. The truth don't need the lie for nothing. It can stand on its own.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:35:02](#)):

Just like the ceremony at that lake, when the moment comes for that truth to be perceived, for it to be captured, for it to be lived, it's not just an intellectual experience. It's the intervention by Mother Earth on our behalf as her children, "Hey, Mother Earth is telling us, 'Guess what kids, I have elders too. I've been around a long time.' Mother Earth, she said that. 'Before I was even around as your mother, way back there, it was just a dream in the crater. And then time and time and time and time. Finally, I emerged and I was just still an infinite infant, the potentiality of

what I was going to be or could be. It was just barely there at the moment, the infinite infant, but then even there, as the cycles fulfill themselves, the young infinite infant becomes a child and the child then becomes a young maiden."

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:36:03](#)):

"She was a young maiden for a long, long time, long time. Find where she becomes mother, and how she becomes Mother Earth through us." We weren't even the first of the kids, right? Pretty bluntly, we're barely getting here. Now we're going to mess it up for everybody else that's supposed to come afterwards. I don't know about that. That's not a good idea. Point is that Mother Earth, even though we are barely one horizon of her generation, power, the human horizon from origination to where we are now, we, the Indigenous Peoples, the Indigenous cultures of the planet, we're the oldest, longest living. We're the ecology of humanity in the planetary context in its original sense and context to the present.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:36:50](#)):

So we have the antidote to the pathology of domination of millions by genocide, colonization and terricide. We have the vaccine to produce the antidote. But those of us were the inheritors of these ancestral forms of knowledge. By ancestral forms of knowledge, I'm talking again what Sandy mentioned, what she knows and what we know as well, that ancestral context doesn't go to the past only. It emerges through the past, but it's coming from the future generations.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:37:22](#)):

That's the ancestral context we're speaking of. In that one, what we see, what we sense, what we feel is that Mother Earth, she got her first gray hairs already now. She's going to the ceremony. What ceremony? The ceremony, "I'm going to be grandma." Mother Earth says, "I'm going to be a grandma. I'm not the young Mother Earth I used to be and I'm going to be grandma. My elders tell me, 'There's a ceremony for you. We're going to pick you up over there.'" She's going, "I got to go," she says. She's telling us, "Don't you want to come with me? What? You're going to try to stay behind? It's not going to work too good for you with nowhere for you to stay behind."

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:37:56](#)):

The point is that those affirmations that you mentioned, Phil, we had one yesterday. The Doctrine of Discovery has been dismantled in Mexico as of yesterday and from the 25th to the 13th of August, which is what's going to happen there, then there's a ceremony that goes back 5,114 years that coincides with The Ceremony Las Cuarto Milpas Cicillaquiahuitl, the rain of stars, which is known in the Western cause astronomy as the Perseid meteor shower. That represents our origin, a point in our creation stories in our origin as being people of the corn, of the nations of the corn.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:38:39](#)):

That ceremony is going to take place on August the 13th of this year, which is so significant to what I just said because on August the 13th, 1521, precisely 500 years ago, that's when the fall of Mexico Teotihuacan and the Spanish came in to institute this doctrine of Christendom, of domination, colonization, genocide that has been normalized for 500 years until yesterday.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:39:07](#)):

Yesterday, that small reclaim of resistance erupted and emerged to the bright flame of regeneration, the regeneration of our original nationhood tied to that star knowledge of being the children of Mother Earth and also to our superseding of the Doctrine of Discovery and the social systems that have been instituted in Mexico in particular over the last 500 years. From the 25th of this month, July, to the 13th of August, which is 20 days, our calendar is built on bundles of 20 days. Those 20 days, the ceremonial activity is going to be taking place throughout Anáhuac, which is our geographical term for the territory that we know to be Mexico today, that's going to be taking place.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:39:52](#)):

So the other people that were joining in with us in that event yesterday out of Mexico were the Mapuches in the south as well. Aucán Huilcamán was part of that because this is truly not only a local, a regional, continental, but a global effort. It's also a cosmetic synchronization. That sounds like a big word. But to us, it's just the nature of what we are. We're children of Mother Earth and that's our father sun. We know that father sun is a star. We know that father sun is a star and has got other fathers and grandfathers further on out there. It's just that this particular star is the one that's not so far away and that's our father.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:40:37](#)):

Friday, the 13th-

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:40:39](#)):

Friday, the 13th, August-

Philip P. Arnold ([00:40:40](#)):

... of August, 2021.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:40:40](#)):

... 1521. From 1521 to 2021, 500 years.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:40:45](#)):

500 years. That's an auspicious day.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:40:49](#)):

But it's 5,113 years actually. Our account is 5,113 years actually. It's the foundation of our calendars, goes back to that.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:41:02](#)):

Tupac, could we ask you to talk a little more about what is the nomenclature of the Doctrine of Discovery for people in Mexico, for others, Spanish speaking people, right, Indigenous Peoples? I know many of our listeners have to appreciate that Catholicism has been sort of inculcated into Indigenous societies for a very long time. So, can you help clear that up for our listeners? The role of religion and how they understand the Doctrine of Discovery functioning on and what kind of words did they use to describe it?

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:41:55](#)):

That's a good question. It came up again in the call we had yesterday out of Mexico, which was again, a call at the national level. The terminology that's most likely used as a reference to refer to the impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and its institutionalization throughout all of the countries of the south beginning with that concept of Latin America, the terminology that's usually used most commonly understood is called Las Bulas Alejandrinas, the Papal Bulls of Pope Alexander. That's the term that's most commonly known. It's understood the concept of the Doctrine of Discovery of Christendom, that's embedded in that because they're referring to the very head of the patriarchy itself, the Papacy itself, right? Which was the divine right of kings instituted through the Roman Empire and the successor as the Holy Roman Empire, which then degraded into what is the Papacy, right? Christendom in any case and in all cases. Emphasis on the dumb, excuse me for that. Anyway, that was a joke.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:43:02](#)):

Anyway, the point is that in that call yesterday, the preliminary study that was accomplished by our sister Tonya Gonnella Frichner in 2010 and submitted to the UN came up and they would say acknowledge. Well, you know what? This study primarily focuses on the Johnson v M'Intosh decision and the implication of that decision and the Anglo-American law systems in North America, Australia and New Zealand. That preliminary study was only intended to be the preliminary study to a full study.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:43:34](#)):

So yesterday, that full study moved forward once again. The continental commission that we've been conversing about and communicating through over the past eight years, since that conference in 2013 last night, made a moment of determination to move that commission forward to accomplish the full study case by case, country by country, all the way to Brazil with no exceptions, including Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Trinidad Tobago. All of these states in this continent, you ask the question, "What's your claim to jurisdiction here? You have a state, what did you just show up out of nowhere or what?" Without exception, it's always the Doctrine of Discovery.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:44:21](#)):

To answer that question in its particulars, country by country, the case law is different. But in terms of Mexico, for example, it wasn't the Johnson v M'Intosh Supreme court decision that played out. The institutionalization of the Doctrine of Discovery in Mexico came out as a result of when they broke off from Spain, beginning in 1821, and created the first empire. The first break away from Spain was just to create another version of empire under Emperor Iturbide, again, tied to that French monarchy, right? It was a power play. Just like the gringos did, they kicked the king out, but kept the crown. In other words, they claimed the territorial domination and jurisdiction, the doctrine, they kept it. That process continued all the way up through the different formations of the country of Mexico as a Republic in the constitution of 1917.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:45:18](#)):

In 1917, the Mexican Constitution, which is the constitution that is still in place today, put the term original property of the state as the determinant to define the jurisdiction of the Republic that was going to be officialized with this constitutional framework. Original property of the state, what is that? When you look it up, open up the books and read what it said there, that concept of original property, the state is referring precisely specifically to the Papal Bulls of Pope Alexander, Las Bulas Alejandrinas. You see what I'm saying? That's how it's been done.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:45:55](#)):

If you go country by country, we've done that in Peru, in Columbia, in Brazil, when you open up their law books, you say, "What's the basis of your jurisdiction or purported claims of jurisdiction as a state?" They always come back to that same answer. Las Bulas Alejandrinas, the Papal Bulls, the institutionalization of those Papal Bulls in the legal infrastructure of the states. That also goes for Cuba. It goes for every single state that is known as an American state because they are all successor states to the doctrine in terms of their claims to territorial jurisdiction.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:46:33](#)):

So then that's the issue that's at hand. So if you have a case such as that, which we do, how do you present your case to the international world community? The dilemma that we have is that the question is so simple that it's hard to get to the simple answer. It's a common case in Canada, Mexico, U.S., Brazil. It's a common case that we have. It's systematic. It's systemic. Therefore to respond systematically and systemically, we have to respond also systematically and with our own systems. In other words, our own cosmographical, sociological, spiritual, cultural systems.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:47:15](#)):

Do we have such a system? I can tell you, we do. I've had that experience. We proved that to ourselves at the first continental encounter in 1990 in Quito, Ecuador. Since then, the continental process of the Indigenous movement has proven that time and time again, including the fact that we had that conference here in Phoenix in 2013, including the fact of what just happened yesterday in Mexico. These were initiatives of the continental commission. The point I'm getting to, Phil, to Sandy and Adam, is that we're being attacked systematically. How do we be the 'WE' that we need to be to address this issue? The geopolitical context that's indigenous in its own generation and formation and expression. How do we be the 'WE' that creator managed to be? I think we have the answer, but sometimes it seems the answer is just too simple. It's not that it's so complicated. It's just that it's so simple and we've come to fear it.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:48:20](#)):

Well, it was mentioned in another interview that we had that as the colonizer is doing its dastardly work, the Indigenous Peoples are paying attention and they're watching. That's the cultural construct of Indigenous Peoples. They pay attention to the natural world, the environment, other human beings. So, you're ready and you're observing this and now is the time for Indigenous Peoples to have their voice because they have been thinking about this since first contact.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:49:02](#)):

I mean, the church came in and was used to install the patriarchy, which is a hierarchical system. We've worked with church leaders before and they work with the Haudenosaunee and they randomly interchange the word creator for their God. At every opportunity, I would always say, "No, you can't do that because your God is hierarchical and our Creator is not. It's relational. We don't base our culture on hierarchy." It took some doing and constantly reminding these people, "No, they're not the same," until I asked, "Admit to me, is not your God a hierarchical God?" And I got the response, "Yes, he is."

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:50:02](#)):

Well, Phil, I think you probably know this as well, but one of the most interesting presentations in this issue were the comparative studies of Joseph Campbell. He breaks it down very, very well, I thought, when he talks about the creation stories of Marduk, of how this concept of monotheism took root in that part of the world, the Middle East, what they call, the middle of what I would've asked.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:50:26](#)):

But we had the same experience here when we had another session in this conversation on dismantling the Doctrine. We brought in a Jungian psychologist and she broke it down for us. She says, "Well, it's a form of trauma that the European colonizers carry that allows them to normalize what they know to be not right. They know in their gut this ain't right. Something's wrong here, but it kind of inoculates them to the pathology to where they can live in that pathological world and pretend to think that it's normal when they know it's not normal." We're not meant to be as human beings like this. We're meant to be human. We have the right to be human. That is the law. It's as simple as that.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:51:12](#)):

This reference to the Bulls that you get in all these different state contexts is more precise in a way than the Doctrine of Discovery, right? Because in *Johnson v M'Intosh* or *Oneida v Sherrill*, or all these other kind of legal formulations of the Doctrine of Discovery, it's about masking what's really going on here, right? It's about masking the Catholic or Christendom's route to land taking. That becomes a kind of Protestant strategy I would like to say. It's a kind of Protestant strategy of masking what comes out of the Vatican in the 15th century. So it seems like your folks are telling it more like it is. They're getting right at the root of the thing.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:52:18](#)):

That's the whole point, I think, because, for example, as you know, Phil, and I think Sandy, you know this as well, at one point we sat down with the Papal Nuncio, right? This is the ambassador of the Vatican State. I mean, the Vatican, Catholicism, Christendom is the religion, right? The originator of that is the Holy Roman Catholic Church as a religious body, as a religious institution, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:52:45](#)):

But yet for us, we know that's not really three different religions, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. That's one religion with three branches, right? They're all sons of Abraham. They all belong to that monotheistic scripture of being subscribers, really literally subscribers of that written. Again, you're talking about the grammar system of the colonizing of the domination system. It begins with an intellectual grammar, where you try to get that fragmentation away from the natural feedback groups of the natural world.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:53:20](#)):

Then you start to deliver to that fragmented psychology and all kinds of stuff goes wrong, including the situation we've got now. The point being is that at that juncture of identifying the Papal Bulls and the instrumentation, the method of how those are used as instrumentations of the colonization, the genocide, what has had to happen is that the Indigenous Peoples in the south, as you know, they're paying an extreme price in blood and bodies. We have situations right now just across the border over the past two months, we've had 20 assassinations in the fight over the [inaudible 00:54:00] just over the past couple of months. One of our main leaders

who you know, you might remember him, Mario Luna, he's right now in hiding with his family—that's what's going on there.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:54:09](#)):

One time I was having a conversation with our relatives and the people in the north, including those of Canada and asked the question, "How many of our people have we had that have been killed in the front lines of a fight of Indigenous Peoples in the struggle of the last two, three years?" The numbers were being added up. It was about maybe not even this many. You ask that same question about how many we've lost in Mexico and we're talking about two or three dozen people just assassinated, killed right in their homesteads, people at the forefront of the fight of the mega development projects that are being used to accomplish the invasion that was initiated with the Doctrine of Discovery and the institutionalization of the state mechanisms through the Papal Bulls, the territorial claim, in other words.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:55:00](#)):

So here's the fundamental question. Okay. Suppose that the Papal Nuncio told us that all those Papal Bulls have been abrogated. They no longer mean anything to us in terms of the dogma of church canon law. They don't mean anything. We've already taken care of that. "It's not our fault," they say, "That those dogmas, those documents have been instituted in the state mechanisms through the Las Bulas Alejandrinas Papal Bulls of Alexander to create the claim for territorial domain jurisdiction over the Indigenous Peoples. That's not our fault because we already abrogated them. As far as we go, they don't apply." Okay then.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:55:37](#)):

But ask that same person, "Okay, then so there's that corporation that just killed a brother down there in Oaxaca or in Columbia or even Canada or any place where one of these mega development projects is being forced in with a concession given to that corporation by the state, a mining concession, a licensing concession, where would the legitimacy of that concession be if the theological argument of the document wasn't still in place?" Those concessions would be completely invalid and they are completely invalid. The bottom line is this. They tell us that they are abrogated. The article that came out about the Bishop there in Syracuse who says that, "According to us, we don't go by those teachings any longer." But if you ask that question to the people in the south, they never heard that from their church authorities. They never got that information. They never got the memo that the document has been abrogated. They never got that memo. They never were given a sermon on that. That hasn't happened.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:56:38](#)):

But yet, nevertheless, regardless, no matter what, 5,113 years of history continues to reveal itself in that version of history, in our narration of history, the Doctrine of Discovery never was valid. All it produced was that legaloid system--It's not a legal system. It's not a legal system. I don't care how much Johnson v M'Intosh, Marshall, or the Constitution of Mexico try to imply or enforce it as a legal system or the corporations try to use it as a justification to continue the extrapolation and extraction of the land resources. It is not a legal system. It's a legaloid system. It's a legaloid system. If it was legal, there would be justice, there would be harmony. That's not the situation that we have. We have colonization and genocide continuing on the levels of the society through the institutionalization of the Doctrine of Discovery through the Papal Bulls in the constitutional frameworks across the board, including Canada and Brazil.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:57:45](#)):

I'm so glad you said that because, from a point of view of religion, history of religions, this becomes an elaborate system of belief, an anthro-centric version that the world is there for us as human beings. We're not here for the world, right? That kind of simple belief system in a way is what holds up these systems of domination and genocide. It almost becomes normalized in our modern world.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:58:22](#)):

I mean, people actually believe they own their property, but it can be taken away at any instant through-

Philip P. Arnold ([00:58:30](#)):

The state.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:58:31](#)):

... the state. Yeah.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:58:33](#)):

We don't own anything. But then from an Indigenous perspective, that's absurd. That's an absurd notion just on the face of it.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:58:43](#)):

It's all about your faith and your belief. That's what these religious institutions have drilled into all of their parishioners, that their true God exists elsewhere and it's just this belief. Then they're able to go about their business in extracting all the resources.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:59:03](#)):

But it's a pathology. It's just pathology.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:59:05](#)):

Yeah, it is.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:59:09](#)):

It's just a destructive pathology. It's the role to doom. It's the path of extinction and sadly, our diagnostic of the situation is that the pathology of White Supremacy through which the Doctrine, the Papal Bulls are being implemented and instituted, without that, it wouldn't have the power that it has. If the constituencies of White Supremacy weren't there to grab that belief system and put it to their use, come on, you're going to tell me your God really believes that white people are superior to everybody else? That what you're trying to tell me? Come on. But they're not saying that out loud, but that's how they're exercising it.

Tupac Enrique-Accosta ([00:59:50](#)):

The tragic part of it is that in our analysis, in our diagnostic, these consistencies of so-called white people have determined to go to their extension, to their doom and they're going to die as white people. The white people concept itself is another version of this pathology, right? That's why I mentioned that part about the 5,000 year old story of how that White Supremacy concept has become the fuel of context for how the Doctrine took root. It took root and it grew deeper in

that larger pathological construct of supremacy, human supremacy over another human by using the concept of whiteness.

Philip P. Arnold ([01:00:40](#)):

That's tremendous. We've come full circle here in this conversation. I think it's a good place to wrap it up. So we're looking forward to future discussions.

Sandy Bigtree ([01:00:50](#)):

And please check our website and we'll have a lot of the notes listed for today's show with Tupac and other resources that you can access online. So thank you very much for joining us. We enjoyed our discussion with you, Tupac, and be well as you go about your day. We'll talk with you again soon.

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([01:01:14](#)):

That's our show. Thank you for tuning in and to our guest, Tupac Enrique-Accosta, and our hosts (singing) Philip Arnold and Sandra Bigtree. The producers of this podcast were Adam J. Brett and Jordan Brady Loewen. Our intro and outro is social dancing music by Oris Edwards and Regis Cook. This podcast is produced in collaboration with Henry Luce Foundation, Syracuse University's Department of Religion and the Indigenous Values Initiative.